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TO RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE 6301
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA IMMEDIATE 3078

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 001621

SIPDIS
FROM NEA AA/S DAVID HALE TO AMBASSADOR RILEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/07/2019
TAGS: [AMGT](#) [MO](#)
SUBJECT: KUDOS TO EMBASSY RABAT AND CG CASABLANCA FOR
REPORTING

Classified By: NEA AA/S David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (U) Tom: I want to commend Embassy Rabat and ConGen Casablanca for posts' excellent reporting, particularly during the last several months of 2008. As an historic U.S. ally and a robust example of political, economic and social reform to others in the Middle East, events in Morocco impact on our approach to other countries in the region. Your reporting has provided a glimpse into the challenges Morocco faces as it continues to develop, helped to shape decisions regarding the substantial foreign assistance the USG provides Morocco, and influenced our approach to other Maghreb countries on issues of regional import.

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POLITICAL ISSUES
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[¶2.](#) (C) Posts' insightful political reporting has broadened our understanding of both regional and domestic concerns to Morocco. 08 Rabat 1204, which provided a view of public and official responses to the conflict in Gaza, contributed to our understanding of the views of the Arab street, while Rabat 753 helped to shape the USG approach to Morocco to increase its engagement in peacekeeping operations. On Western Sahara, post's timely insights into our current policy, sensitivity to human rights issues in Western Sahara (08 Rabat 684), the effect of the political process on confidence building measures (08 Rabat 741), and the UN Special Representative's view of the situation in Western Sahara (08 Rabat 1154) were key to shaping USG actions in Washington and New York. Rabat's cables (08 Rabat 398, 08 RABAT 400 and 08 RABAT 422) on the sources of radicalization highlighted the government's challenges in battling extremism, particularly within Moroccan prisons, and offered concrete opportunities for USG assistance in the critical area of counterterrorism.

[¶3.](#) (C) Posts' reporting of domestic issues was equally impressive. 08 Casablanca 210 demonstrated the tension between religious conservatism and Moroccan social norms, while Casablanca 08 222 illuminated the difficulty of implementing the 2003 Family Code (aka Mudawanna), which is still considered one of the most controversial reforms ever undertaken in the Muslim world. Posts' consistent coverage of parliament and political parties (08 Rabat 577, 08 Casablanca 213, 08 Rabat 1169 and 08 Rabat 1144) provided a glimpse of the internal political dynamic, and good justification for continued USG support to Morocco's government capacity building efforts. INL characterized 08 Rabat 1049 as one of the best assessments of narcotics control efforts that the Bureau received during [¶2008.](#)

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ECONOMIC ISSUES
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[¶4.](#) (C) Given the FTA and \$697M Millennium Challenge Compact, Washington interest in Moroccan economic development is

significant. Posts' reporting has provided a clear picture of Morocco's difficulties to expand economic opportunities for its citizens in the face of a world economic crisis. Rabat cables on the local impact of that crisis (08 Rabat 1084), Morocco's attainment of "Advanced Status" within the European Union (08 Rabat 1122), issues facing the U.S.-Morocco FTA (08 Rabat 1190) and the government's attempts to increase affordable housing across the country (08 Rabat 737) helped to underscore where USG assistance can be more effective. Casablanca's excellent reporting on the business sector, notably on Morocco's efforts to encourage the microcredit sector in harmony with a Millennium Challenge Compact project (08 Casablanca 235) and on Morocco's comparative advantage in the service sector (08 Casablanca 209) provided good insight on the country's economic drivers. Finally, 08 Rabat 1136 provided a unique perspective from a neighborhood bathhouse on how increasing food prices are affecting everyday Moroccans.

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